

STATINTL

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NEWS ANALYSIS SERVICE

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ADD 1 PLOTS, WASHINGTON (UP-021)

THE COX NEWSPAPERS TODAY REPORTED FORMER CIA DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS GAVE PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON "UNQUALIFIED ASSURANCE" IN 1965 THAT THE AGENCY HAD NEVER BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY ASSASSINATIONS.

THE COX REPORT QUOTED FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL AND UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE NICHOLAS KATZENBACH AS SAYING HE WAS THE ONLY OTHER PERSON PRESENT WHEN JOHNSON QUESTIONED HELMS 10 YEARS AGO. HELMS IS NOW AMBASSADOR TO IRAN BUT WAS CIA DIRECTOR AT THE TIME.

"THE MEETING WAS IN THE SMALL OFFICE OFF THE OVAL OFFICE," THE COX REPORT QUOTED KATZENBACH. "I THINK THE PURPOSE WAS AN UPDATE ON THE REBELLION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC."

"IT WAS AT THE END OF THE MEETING WHEN JOHNSON ASKED ABOUT THE ASSASSINATIONS," KATZENBACH SAID. "HE AND HELMS STOOD UP. HELMS WAS FLAT. I TOOK IT AS AN UNQUALIFIED ASSURANCE THAT THE AGENCY HAD NEVER BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY KIND OF AN ASSASSINATION."

"CONSIDERING HOW HE BECAME PRESIDENT (BECAUSE OF THE ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY), IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT JOHNSON WAS ACUTELY SENSITIVE ON THE SUBJECT OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS."

HE SAID JOHNSON WAS CONCERNED ABOUT BOTH TRUJILLO'S DEATH AND THE ASSASSINATION OF FORMER PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM OF SOUTH VIETNAM, WHO WAS KILLED IN 1963.

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Comment.

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These comments represent the initial and tentative reaction of the CIA Operations Center and of the appropriate analytic component in the Agency to the attached item from the news wire services.

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CIA 2050 Lead 210
BY DAVID C. MARTIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON AP - President Lyndon B. Johnson was told during his tenure in office that the Central Intelligence Agency "had never been involved in any kind of assassination," Cox Newspapers reported today.

The assurance was made by former CIA Director Richard Helms, who at the time was deputy director of the agency, former Atty. Gen. Nicholas deB. Katzenbach was reported as saying.

Katzenbach told the newspaper chain that he was the only other person present when Johnson asked Helms about CIA assassination plots. Katzenbach remarked that "I'm puzzled," about published reports that President Ford is concerned that current investigations might expose CIA involvement in assassinations during the late 1950s and 1960s.

At the same time, The Washington Post reported the CIA is apprehensive that the probes might link the agency to assassination plots aimed at Fidel Castro in Cuba, Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Patrice Lumumba in the Congo.

The agency allegedly has acknowledged privately that assassination episodes in Cuba and the Dominican Republic may have been attempted by persons with close contacts to the CIA, The Post reported.

Citing a reliable source, the Post said killing Lumumba was discussed within the agency, but that no action was taken.

Trujillo and Lumumba were murdered in 1961. Castro has claimed to have squelched purported attempts on his life.

Former agency officials have insisted that no killings ever were carried out.

Meanwhile, the CIA turned over to Rep. Bella Abzug a file on her compiled by the agency. The file represented the first concrete evidence of what CIA director William E. Colby has acknowledged were improper activities.

The file, 2nd graf 2050.

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